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JGJR.: 07-06

Paper No: ____

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JUL 12 2006

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Shoki	:	DECISION
Application No.: 09/052,670	:	
Filing Date: 31 March, 1998	:	
Attorney Docket No. HAG-111	:	

This is a decision on the petition filed on 17 April, 2006, to withdraw the holding of abandonment and considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

The Change of Correspondence Address presented with the instant petition is acknowledged and made of record.

For the reasons set forth below the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED.**

NOTES:

- (1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted.

(It is noted, however, that Petitioner may be unable to present a satisfactory showing to support a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.)

- (2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the Notice of Allowance/Allowability and Fees Due mailed on 25 August, 1999,¹ with reply due under a non-extendable deadline on or before Monday, 26 November, 1999;
- the instant application went abandoned after midnight 26 November, 1999;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 19 April, 2000;²
- Petitioner took no action whatsoever that is of record herein until 12 April, 2004—fifty-three (53) months after abandonment and forty-eight (48) months after Notice thereof—at which time Petitioner filed the original request to withdraw the holding of abandonment, and made absolutely no documentary showing in support thereof, wholly ignoring the guidance in the commentary of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP §711.03(c));
- after Petitioner's Status Inquiry of 30 August, 2004, on 13 December, 2004, the Group Director denied the 12 April, 2004, request to withdraw the holding of abandonment;
- ignoring the decision of 13 December, 2004, Petitioner filed a Status Inquiry on 7 June, 2005;
- further ignoring the decision of 13 December, 2004, Petitioner filed a Status Inquiry on 26 January, 2006;
- Petitioner filed the instant petition on 17 April, 2006;
- with the instant petition, Petitioner now submits what is averred to be true copies of a

¹ Amazingly, Petitioner complains—now almost seven (7) years after the fact—that he has not received a copy of this paper. That he has not previously undertaken to do so is an interesting insight into the matter. Nonetheless, a copy of this paper is to be enclosed herewith.

² Again Petitioner rails years after the fact that he did not receive a copy of a paper—in this case the Notice of Abandonment. If Petitioner (or his staff) sought to associate this application with a customer number, he (or they) could retrieve the paper online. However, out of an abundance of caution and to obviate further complaints from Petitioner in this regard, a copy of this paper is to be enclosed herewith.

Notice of Change of Address and a receipt card (see: MPEP §503³), however, fatal to Petitioner's argument is that the card is not date-stamped as received by the Office—rather, the stamp that appears to be located on the address side of the card is in fact a postal-meter imprint placed by Petitioner's office as return postage.

Thus, there is as of this writing no evidence of record that the Office ever received Notice of Petitioner's change of address.

Petitioner:

- did not submit the original petition timely in November or December of 1999 subsequent to abandonment or at least in April, May or June of 2000 subsequent to Notice thereof;

³ MPEP §503 provides in pertinent part:
§503 Application Number and Filing Receipt

* * *

A return postcard should be attached to *each* patent application for which a receipt is desired. It is important that the return postcard itemize all of the components of the application. If the postcard does not itemize each of the components of the application, it will not serve as evidence that any component which was not itemized was received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). It should be recognized that the identification of an application by application number does not necessarily signify that the USPTO has accepted the application as complete (37 C.F.R. §1.53(a)).

* * *

RETURN POSTCARD

If a receipt of any item (e.g., paper or fee) filed in the USPTO is desired, it may be obtained by enclosing with the paper a self-addressed postcard specifically identifying the item. The USPTO will stamp the receipt date on the postcard and place it in the outgoing mail. A postcard receipt which itemizes and properly identifies the items which are being filed serves as *prima facie* evidence of receipt in the USPTO of all the items listed thereon on the date stamped thereon by the USPTO.

The identifying data on the postcard should be so complete as to clearly identify the item for which receipt is requested. For example, the postcard should identify the applicant's name, application number (if known), confirmation number (if known), filing date, interference number, title of the invention, etc. The postcard should also identify the type of paper being filed, e.g., new application, affidavit, amendment, notice of appeal, appeal brief, drawings, fees, motions, supplemental oath or declaration, petition, etc., and the number of pages being submitted. If a new application is being filed, all parts of the application being submitted should be separately listed on the postcard, e.g., the number of pages of specification (including written description, claims and abstract), number of claims, number of sheets of drawings, number of pages of oath/declaration, number of pages of cover sheet (provisional application).

The postcard receipt will not serve as *prima facie* evidence of receipt of any item which is not adequately itemized on the postcard. For example, merely listing on the postcard "a complete application" or "patent application" will not serve as a proper receipt for each of the required components of an application (e.g., specification (including claims), drawings (if necessary), oath or declaration and the application filing fee) or missing portions (e.g., pages, sheets of drawings) of an application if one of the components or portion of a component is found to be missing by the USPTO. Each separate component should be specifically and properly itemized on the postcard. Furthermore, merely incorporating by reference in the postcard receipt, the items listed in a transmittal letter will not serve as *prima facie* evidence of receipt of those items.

The person receiving the item(s) in the USPTO will check the listing on the postcard against the item(s) being filed to be sure they are properly identified and that all the items listed on the postcard are presently being submitted to the USPTO. If any of the items listed on the postcard are not being submitted to the USPTO, those items will be crossed off and the post-card initialed by the person receiving the items. Upon return of a postcard receipt from the USPTO, the postcard receipt should be promptly reviewed by the person who filed the items to ensure that every item specifically denoted on the postcard was received by the USPTO. If the postcard receipt has been annotated to indicate that a particular item denoted on the postcard was not received by the USPTO, the postcard receipt will not serve as *prima facie* evidence of receipt of that item in the USPTO. (Emphasis supplied.)

- did not submit at a far earlier date in support of an argument of unavoidable delay the copies of the documents now presented years later;⁴
- failed to appreciate, in papers received by him from the Office, the clear indication between 1998 and 2000 that the Office had not entered a change of address—Notice of which Petitioner avers to have submitted but which apparently was not received by, the Office.

Indeed, the Office did not enter a change of address in 1998 in response to the Notice, because the Office never received a Notice of Change of Address.

Further, Petitioner replied on 19 July, 1999, to the 2 April, 1999, non-final Office action mailed to the old (LaSalle Street) address. The reply clearly evidences that Petitioner knew or should have known by those dates that the Office had not acted to change the correspondence address of record in this application even if Petitioner had not reviewed the firm file for the instant application to observe that it contained no date-stamped receipt card for the Notice of Change of Address.

The showing that Petitioner had to make was and is set out in the commentary at MPEP §711.03(c), and the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.181 specifically address the timing requirements.⁵

Thus, Petitioner ignored not only the facts but also the procedure applicable herein.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and those registered to practice *and* all others who make representations before the Office are reminded to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.⁶

⁴ Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (Comm'r Pat. 1887) (the term "unavoidable" "is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business").

⁵ Congress has required that applicants not delay in make "reasonable efforts to conclude processing or examination of an application." (See: 35 U.S.C. §154(b)(2)(ii).)

⁶ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

Specifically, the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §10.18 provide:

§ 10.18 Signature and certificate for correspondence filed in the Patent and Trademark Office.

Monitoring of the status of applications on Private PAIR can inform one's management of application responses and provide an indication when mailings of Office actions should be expected.

Petitioner ignored the requirement that the petition herein be filed within two months of the action complained of (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.181.), as well as the showing required to prevail.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).⁷

(a) For all documents filed in the Office in patent, trademark, and other non-patent matters, except for correspondence that is required to be signed by the applicant or party, each piece of correspondence filed by a practitioner in the Patent and Trademark Office must bear a signature by such practitioner complying with the provisions of §1.4(d), §1.4(e), or § 2.193(c)(1) of this chapter.

(b) By presenting to the Office (whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating) any paper, the party presenting such paper, whether a practitioner or non-practitioner, is certifying that—

(1) All statements made therein of the party's own knowledge are true, all statements made therein on information and belief are believed to be true, and all statements made therein are made with the knowledge that whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Patent and Trademark Office, knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be subject to the penalties set forth under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that violations of this paragraph may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom; and

(2) To the best of the party's knowledge, information and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances, that —

(i) The paper is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass someone or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of prosecution before the Office;

(ii) The claims and other legal contentions therein are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law or the establishment of new law;

(iii) The allegations and other factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, are likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and

(iv) The denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence, or if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on a lack of information or belief.

(c) Violations of paragraph (b)(1) of this section by a practitioner or non-practitioner may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom. Violations of any of paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section are, after notice and reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to such sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, which may include, but are not limited to, any combination of —

(1) Holding certain facts to have been established;

(2) Returning papers;

(3) Precluding a party from filing a paper, or presenting or contesting an issue;

(4) Imposing a monetary sanction;

(5) Requiring a terminal disclaimer for the period of the delay; or

(6) Terminating the proceedings in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(d) Any practitioner violating the provisions of this section may also be subject to disciplinary action. See § 10.23(c)(15).

[Added 50 FR 5175, Feb. 6, 1985, effective Mar. 8, 1985; para. (a) revised, 58 FR 54494, Oct. 22, 1993, effective Nov. 22, 1993; paras. (a) & (b) revised, paras. (c) & (d) added, 62 FR 53131, Oct. 10, 1997, effective Dec. 1, 1997; para. (a) revised, 69 FR 56481, Sept. 21, 2004, effective Oct. 21, 2004]

⁷ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁸

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁹ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).¹⁰

And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.¹¹ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. In determining if a delay was unavoidable, decisions on reviving abandoned applications have adopted the standard of the reasonably prudent person acting in their most important business matters.¹²

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.¹³))

Withdrawal of the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal

⁸ Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

⁹ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

¹⁰ See: *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

¹¹ See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.

¹² *Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (Comm'r Pat. 1887) (the term "unavoidable" "is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business"); *In re Mattullath*, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (D.C. Cir. 1912); *Ex parte Henrich*, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (Comm'r Pat. 1913).

¹³ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

of a holding of abandonment.¹⁴

Further, the commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) provides:

* * *

A. Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on Failure To Receive Office Action

In *Delgar v. Schulyer*, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971), the court decided that the Office should mail a new Notice of Allowance in view of the evidence presented in support of the contention that the applicant's representative did not receive the original Notice of Allowance. Under the reasoning of *Delgar*, an allegation that an Office action was never received may be considered in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. If adequately supported, the Office may grant the petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment and remail the Office action. That is, the reasoning of *Delgar* is applicable regardless of whether an application is held abandoned for failure to timely pay the issue fee (35 U.S.C. 151) or for failure to prosecute (35 U.S.C. 133). To minimize costs and burdens to practitioners and the Office, the Office has modified the showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office action. The showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office communication must include a statement from the practitioner stating that the Office communication was not received by the practitioner and attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication was not received. A copy of the docket record where the nonreceived Office communication would have been entered had it been received and docketed must be attached to and referenced in practitioner's statement. For example, if a three month period for reply was set in the nonreceived Office action, a copy of the docket report showing all replies docketed for a date three months from the mail date of the nonreceived Office action must be submitted as documentary proof of nonreceipt of the Office action.

* * *

The showing outlined above may not be sufficient if there are circumstances that point to a conclusion that the Office action may have been lost after receipt rather than a conclusion that the Office action was lost in the mail (e.g., if the practitioner has a history of not receiving Office actions).

Evidence of nonreceipt of an Office communication or action (e.g., Notice of Abandonment or an advisory action) other than that action to which reply was required to avoid abandonment would not warrant withdrawal of the holding of

¹⁴ See: *Delgar v. Schulyer*, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).

abandonment. Abandonment takes place by operation of law for failure to reply to an Office action or timely pay the issue fee, not by operation of the mailing of a Notice of Abandonment. See *Lorenz v. Finkl*, 333 F.2d 885, 889-90, 142 USPQ 26, 29-30 (CCPA 1964); *Krahn v. Commissioner*, 15 USPQ2d 1823, 1824 (E.D. Va 1990); *In re Application of Fischer*, 6 USPQ2d 1573, 1574 (Comm'r Pat. 1988). (Emphasis supplied.)

* * *

And the regulation requires that relief be sought within two (2) months of the act complained of.

Thus, as of this writing Petitioner appears not to have satisfied and not to be able to satisfy the showing or the timeliness requirements described above.

CONCLUSION

Because it appears that Petitioner has not satisfied the burdens set forth in Delgar v. Schulyer, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 hereby is **dismissed**.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

It appears that, because Petitioner failed to fail of record a response to the Office action in question, Petitioner's only alternative to irretrievable abandonment may be petition alleging unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).¹⁵

Petitioner may wish to file such a petition to the Commissioner requesting revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay. (See: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/documents/0700_711_03_c.htm#sect711.03c)

A petition to revive on the grounds of unintentional delay must be filed promptly and such petition must be accompanied by the reply (the amendment), the petition fee, and a statement that "the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition was unintentional." (The statement is in the form available online.)

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:¹⁶

¹⁵ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.183 sets forth that waiver of the rules is "subject to such other requirements as may be imposed."

¹⁶ On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number changed to (571) 273-8300. The old FAX number no longer is in service and (571) 273-8300 will be the only facsimile number recognized for centralized delivery. (For further information. see: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/cfax062005.pdf> .)

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¹⁷ To determine the appropriate addresses for other subject-specific correspondence, refer to the USPTO Web site at www.uspto.gov.